



## Hazel Johnson

January 26, 1932 - December 18, 2019

On Wednesday morning, December 18, 2019, God called home a humble servant and true woman of God, Hazel Elizabeth Johnson Harkness. It is without a doubt, she heard the voice of the Lord say, "Well done my good and faithful servant daughter; well done. Now receive your rest and reward." She truly loved the Lord and is now rejoicing and celebrating with her loved ones who have gone on before.

Born January 26, 1931, in Antreville, South Carolina, she was the daughter of the late Myrtle Johnson and Ralph Newell. A member of Flat Rock AME Church, she attended and graduated from the public schools of Anderson County before earning a Bachelor of Science in Education from Allen University in Columbia, South Carolina, and pursuing post graduate work at the University of South Carolina. Hazel was a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated.

Hazel was united in holy matrimony to her life partner, George S. Harkness, Sr., for sixty-one years. To this union, six children were born: George, Jr.; Timothy; Mark; Richard "Kip;" Jennifer "Dottie;" and Lori. A faithful and devoted wife and mother, Hazel (with invaluable assistance from George) raised four sons to become godly men and most of those life lessons were taught in strong home discipline, church involvement, respect, and compassion to give back to the community. Many of these lessons included priceless moments and

memories. She raised two daughters and taught them to seek the best out of life through self-respect first and a faith-filled relationship with God. Hazel poured into many young women's lives, but she always ensured that her daughters knew her presence and support in all their life endeavors and journey. She had an especially close relationship with her baby girl, Lori, who was ever-present and always made sure "Mama" looked her best and celebrated all holidays from the assisted living facility to the nursing home. "Mama" will forever hold a special place in the hearts of all her children; in all her lessons to them, she was most consistent in sharing her love equally, they all felt like her favorite. She consistently shared her wisdom: "You plus God is a MAJORITY. Always TRUST GOD. He is FAITHFUL."

Soon after marrying, the young couple joined Chappelle Memorial AME Church, attending faithfully and ensuring their children were raised to know and love Jesus through Sunday School, church involvement and regular attendance. Perhaps it is that influence that impacted four of their children to go into the ministry and become ordained ministers, with three becoming pastors in the AME Church. While attending Chappelle Memorial, she served on the Stewardess Board, Missionary Society, Choir, and a Vacation Bible School Teacher. She was selected as Woman of the Year and received several other recognitions for her service at the church during her sixty plus years of membership.

How do you capture the life of such a uniquely dynamic and strong woman in the brevity of a program space? Hazel always encouraged education and compassion for underserved children and the elderly. She educated hundreds of children in her lifetime as a teacher and mentor. She began her teaching career in Abbeville, South Carolina, at Branch Street Elementary School; later, she relocated to Columbia and began working for Richland County School District One as a teacher. She retired from South Kilbourne Elementary School after over twenty-five years of dedicated and excellent service to

educating the young minds of South Carolina. Following her retirement, she, along with her husband and other retiree friends and family, traveled the country and the world. They shared numerous trips and memories with friends, some of whom have also passed on to glory.

Hazel was deeply committed to her truest calling: mentoring young women and being a servant-leader in the community. She served as a leader in the Nation Council of Negro Women (Altrusettes), mentoring and guiding hundreds of girls over a twenty year span to be leaders and to give unselfishly to those underserved in the community. She served in leadership in the AME Church as a life-long member of the Missionary Society. She served year round visiting nursing homes, homes for children, the Ronald McDonald House, the March of Dimes, and numerous nonprofit organizations. She was an amazing spirit of love, dedication and integrity, and never sought or expected any type of recognition or reward. The spirit of servant-leadership is the legacy she left her children and grandchildren. Her special love was shown in support of her beloved sorority, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated. She served as an advisor for Allen University and Columbia College students for over twenty-five years. She set the bar for what is expected of all members of her beloved DST and shared it for over twenty-five years, resulting in outstanding women leaders of DST - both academically and servant-leaders. She and her husband never backed down from standing up for what is right, no matter how difficult, which garnered great levels of respect, from all races, in the church and the community.

When Hazel was not in the classroom, at a church meeting, or traveling with her husband, you could find her hanging with her "sisters:" Lurena Cochran; Willena Bonner; Leola Garrett; cousin Anna Ruth; and cousin Hattie; all of whom have passed. They shared a blessed lifetime friendship and sisterhood. Other activities included visiting with her neighbors, working with the Susan B

Ruff Garden Club - where she won many state fair awards for her flower arrangements, enjoying her bridge club, or shopping with Dottie and Lori at Tapp's Department Store. As the family grew with grandchildren, she spent many hours and visits supporting them at games, school programs, and grandparents' days. She loved her grandchildren and poured into them as much as she did her children, One thing she often shared with her grandchildren is that "you can't love something that can't love you back," her effort to teach them the importance of not valuing material things but to value people.

In addition to her parents and husband, she was preceded in death by a sister, Dorothy Johnson (Adolph) Conner.

She leaves to cherish precious memories four sons: George S (Joyce) Harkness of Fayetteville, Georgia, Timothy F (Bonita) Harkness of Columbia, Mark R (Kim) Harkness of Acworth, Georgia, and Richard "Kip" (Cathy) Harkness of Mount Pleasant, South Carolina; two daughters: Jennifer "Dottie" (Morris, Jr.) Allen of Powder Springs, Georgia, and Lori Harkness of Charlotte, North Carolina; seventeen grandchildren: Mark II, Sherita, Kayla, George III, Curtis, Derek, Rick II, Richard Daniel, Jordan, Hazel, Jamal, Matthew, Morris III "Tre," B'Nard, Elizabeth "Lizzie," Malik, and Apryl; a great-granddaughter: Elaina Grace Harkness; nephew: Charles (Martha) Conner, Sr.; two cousin-brothers: Reverend Bobby (Elaine) Johnson and George (Mary) Johnson; four sisters-in-law: Qualardeen Pressley, Ruth Harkness, Maggie Harkness, and Edna Harkness; a special group of "sons and daughters": Eugene, Beth and Nathaniel Speed: the "Garrett Boys;" the "Highland Park Children": Cheryl Cochran Myrick, Christopher Cochran, Ingrid "Nikki" Taylor, Indira "Bonnie" Taylor, Iyoibda Tyler Riley, Bernard Martin, Mario Bonner, Marcellus Primus, Dexter Primus, John Kirkland, Millicent Kirkland; "Granny's Babies;" and a host of other relatives and friends.



# Previous Events

## Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Ceremony

DEC **22**. 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Palmer Memorial Chapel - Columbia  
1200 Fontaine Place  
Columbia, SC 29223  
(803) 786-6300  
palmermemorialchapel@gmail.com  
<https://www.palmermemorialchapel.com>

## Family Visitation

DEC **22**. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Palmer Memorial Chapel - Columbia  
1200 Fontaine Place  
Columbia, SC 29223  
(803) 786-6300  
palmermemorialchapel@gmail.com  
<https://www.palmermemorialchapel.com>

## Public Viewing

DEC **23**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Reid Chapel AME Church  
6005 David Street  
Columbia, SC 29203

## Celebration of Life

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DEC **23**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Reid Chapel AME Church  
6005 David Street  
Columbia, SC 29203

# Tribute Wall



“ *Hazel Johnson*

October 04, 2023 at 11:33 AM



“ *To the family of Lady Hazel. Thank you for showing me wonderful teaching skills at Hopkins Elemenary in the early 70s. You were a wonderful role model and teacher.*

**Barbara Gilley** - December 27, 2019 at 11:27 AM



“ *To the Harkness Family,*

*My sincere and heartfelt condolences to you during this time of bereavement. I worked closely with your father in the Connectional Lay Organization and had the opportunity to get to know your mother. I thank God for her witness and legacy of developing young people to their fullest potential. Remember that God's grace is sufficient to comfort and console you at this time and always.*

*With Sincere Sympathy,*

*Dr. Paulette Coleman  
Retired General Officer*

**Paulette Coleman** - December 23, 2019 at 07:12 PM

YM

“ Yolanda Martin lit a candle in memory of Hazel Johnson



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**Yolanda Martin** - December 23, 2019 at 01:41 PM

YM

“ To: Lori L. Harkness and Family  
We are sorry to hear of your mother's passing. You are in our thoughts and prayers. We hope that all of your beautiful memories of (and with) her, along with the celebration of her long, well-lived life will always comfort you.  
Love, Yolanda R. Martin and Family

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**Yolanda Martin** - December 23, 2019 at 01:40 PM

LN

“ TO: THE HARKNESS FAMILY;  
WE PRAY FOR YOUR STRENGTH AS YOU EXPERIENCE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH A GRACEFUL, ELEGANT AND DIGNIFIED SERVANT:  
I FONDLY REMEMBER THE VISITS AND CONVERSATIONS MR. GEORGE AND MY DAD, THE LATE W.G."SON" RICHBURG SHARED AS LAY PERSONS OF THE A.M.E. CHURCH  
:  
REST IN PEACE !  
LEON N., SR. & VIRGINIA B. RICHBURG  
SUMMERTON, SOUTH CAROLINA



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**LEON N. RICHBURG, SR** - December 23, 2019 at 08:57 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Hazel Johnson.*



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December 22, 2019 at 12:17 PM



“ *Rev. Richard Harkness and family sorry to hear of your Mother's passing, we're praying for you as God strengthen and comfort you. She truly fought the good fight. The Duncan family*

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**Bro. Freddie & Rev Dorothy Duncan** - December 21, 2019 at 11:16 AM